

## Wyoming Worksite Wellness' ABC's for building a wellness program

Achieving administrative wellness support

Building a dedicated wellness team

Collecting appropriate wellness data

Developing a worksite wellness program plan

Executing wellness interventions

Forming a supportive wellness culture

**Generating the correct wellness outcomes evaluations**

### **G**enerating the correct wellness outcomes evaluations

Evaluations determine the outcome of a program, and help determine if goals and objectives were met. It may be a good idea to plan your outcomes and how you will evaluate them in the initial stages of designing your worksite wellness plan. Your worksite wellness committee may view this as planning from the end to the beginning, and feel like they are working backwards, but it works!

The evaluations may determine that some interventions did not produce the desired results. The evaluations may also expose that a well liked program had too high of a cost for the results realized. This is the information your wellness committee will use to make adjustments that enhance the focus of the wellness program, while maintaining cost effectiveness. As your wellness committee develops better interventions, they will also deepen the trust between senior level management and the workforce.

*As you design your  
worksite wellness  
program remember to  
build in flexibility.  
This important element  
will pay off when you  
address the results of  
your wellness program's  
evaluation*

Wyoming Worksite Wellness, 2008

When the desired results are realized, the opportunity to praise management and participants will be hard to pass up; so don't! This is a great opportunity to continue building pride and support in your wellness program by celebrating success.

# Learning Objectives:

**By the end of this section you should be able to apply the necessary skills and knowledge gained in this section; along with the knowledge and skills gained in other sections of this toolkit to:**

Evaluate you worksite wellness program in the following areas

- Structure of the wellness program
- How well the program is meeting the needs of the participants
- How well the program is meeting the needs of the employer
- Are the interventions meeting the desired outcomes
- What to do with your evaluation results

## Evaluation

The ultimate goal of a wellness program, from the perspective of management, is to contain or reduce costs. The biggest potential areas for cost savings are health care claims, absenteeism, productivity, and disability. In Component C (Collecting appropriate wellness data) you collected “before” data on these variables. To show a change, it is just a matter of collecting “after” data at some later time, and then comparing. To measure cost-effectiveness, however, you will need to record all expenses with which to compare outcomes. Be aware that it may take 3 to 5 years, generally, to see significant savings; especially in health care costs. Also, keep in mind that if health care (or other) costs have been rising at say 11 percent a year, and after the wellness program is in place they only rise 4 percent that is a savings.

Besides cost savings, there are many other meaningful things to measure and report on in your wellness program. These include:

- *Reduced risk factors.* This refers to significant changes in the behaviors and lifestyles that ultimately affect the costs listed in the preceding paragraph. Some examples are pounds of weight lost, number of employees who quit tobacco products, and number of employees with a chronic health condition who enrolled in a disease management program.
- *Other behavior changes.* These are the little things that add up; for example, measurable changes in eating healthier foods in the cafeteria and from the vending machines; number of employees who joined a fitness club or walking group; and number of employees who got blood pressure or cholesterol screenings at the health fair.
- *Increased knowledge and skills.* How many demonstrated knowledge on physical activity, nutrition, the importance of wellness exams and interventions that improve overall health.
- *Perception of organizational culture.* This includes perceived healthiness of the environment, as well as of policies that affect mental or physical health, job fit and satisfaction, career development, and work/life balance. You could do a “before” survey, including asking for suggestions for changes, then make relevant changes, and do an “after” survey. Piggybacking onto your HRA is one efficient way of getting this survey data.
- *Participation rates.* How many attended wellness seminars and safety classes; how many got elder care or child care referrals; how many used the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to talk to a counselor; what wellness-related articles did you publish in your newsletter or intranet?

## Evaluation Continued:

- *Participant satisfaction.* For all activities, give participants satisfaction surveys to complete. The survey should collect quantitative data (e.g., five-point rating scale from *excellent* to *poor*) as well as ask open-ended questions such as “How could we do it better next time?”

Evaluation is easier if you have prepared well for it all along. In component D (Developing a worksite wellness program plan) you selected clear and measurable goals and objectives. You need to be sure to collect data all year, for all activities, with which to measure these goals and objectives.

Honesty and candor in reporting your results are important. We would like to find that all of our initiatives bore fruit, but that is not likely to happen. Some will work out; some won't. And negative results are just as useful to guide future programming as positive ones are. They tell you that something needs to change. So resist the temptation to gloss over any disappointing data, or to spin everything rosy. Tell it like it is. Of course, this also means fully singing the praises about things that went well.

One final consideration is what to do with the results of your evaluation. First, you will want to present them to your management. Hopefully the results will justify the continuation of, if not an increase, in the budget. Second, use the results to plan what to do different in the coming year. Third, report the results to your employees. You may want to selectively excerpt those parts that are relevant for that audience, rather than giving them all the details. Keep in mind that reporting positive results to your employees is an excellent way to increase participation in the future.